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ABSTRACT

For the United States, fighting World War I involved not only preparing young citizens to fight the enemy abroad, but rooting out alien enemies at home. The national consensus, believed vital to success, presupposed a common set of values, shared behaviors, and a high degree of identification with the nation. The more homogeneous the population, the more likely it would voluntarily and spontaneously coalesce behind a common plan of action. Differences became suspect and a threat to consensus. The desire to aggressively assimilate new immigrants became linked to questions of loyalties and allegiances in wartime. The nation turned to its schools as a way to communicate its policies and generate popular support for the War. It also looked to the schools to counter dissent and to acculturate immigrants so that they would mesh with the established U.S. community and join the crusade to "make the world safe for democracy." The urgency of the movement led to direct federal involvement in Americanization programs and related work in immigrant education. This paper examines the federal government initiatives regarding Americanization, as represented by the work of three agencies: (1) the Bureau of Naturalization, (2) the Bureau of Education, and (3) the Committee on Public Information. The activities initiated by each agency are described, with emphasis on how each sought to transmit its program to the local level. An effort is made to assess the effects, if any, of these programs on the U.S. immigrant population. (JB)

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PREACH AMERICANISM!

THE EDUCATION OF IMMIGRANTS DURING THE GREAT WAR

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Introduction

In the spring of 1917 America went to war and so did its public schools, carrying along with them their native-born and immigrant students. Fighting the Great War involved not only preparing young Americans to fight the enemy abroad, but to root out alien enemies at home. Many believed that only an America populated by 100% Americans could power the crusade unleased by President Wilson and Congress.

The pressing need to rapidly mobilize America for war highlighted the heterogeneity and lines of cleavage in American society. These differences, long tacitly acknowledged, took on sinister shades. As the historian Barry Karl observed, "the need to 'win the war' produced a sense of urgency that veiled a fear, not simply that the war might be lost or that the consequences of losing it would be dire, but that the cause of failure would be the internal divisions that the years from 1914-1917 had revealed so clearly."[1]

The national consensus, which was believed vital to success, presupposed a common set of values, shared behaviors and a high degree of identification with the nation. The more homogeneous the population and the less it was exposed to deviant ideas, values and behaviors, the more likely it would voluntarily and spontaneously coalesce behind a common plan of action. Differences became suspect and a threat to consensus. Conformity had to be rewarded and deviance suppressed in order to insure common action and ultimate victory.

The large and not yet assimilated new immigrants, especially in the larger cities, and Germans throughout the nation, were perceived by many native-born Americans as disquietingly different in language, customs, behaviors and loyalties. Efforts to Americanize them certainly predated the Great War. But the desire to aggressively assimilate newcomers now became linked to questions of loyalties and allegiances in wartime. Could they be trusted, would they serve in the army, buy Bonds, support the

government? George Creel, Director of the C.P.I., reported that among native Americans "there was often a firm conviction that our declaration of war carried an instant knowledge of English with it, and that all who persisted in speaking any other tongue after April 6, 1917, were either actual or potential 'disloyalists,'...."[2]

Radical politics associated with vocal segments of the immigrant community were also seen as a threat to established ways and, in wartime when support for one's government was expected, political and economic radicalism were often viewed as treason. Under these conditions "Americanization" took on new militant tones, and greatly enhanced importance.

The growing antipathy toward immigrants was not just a product of the War. As John Higham has made clear,[3] the fear of the immigrant "invasion" -- taking over the cities, polluting the language and culture, diluting the gene-pool, depressing industrial wages, corrupting politics, blocking prohibition, stretched well back into the 19th c. In peacetime, however, prejudices are not readily pushed to the point of action by the majority, as laissez-faire attitudes and nominal tolerance serve as counterweights to extremist views. But the War provided the pretext to publicly question and attack those who were different, who deviated politically, linguistically or culturally. The drive for consensus and support of the government thus served to legitimize prior fears and prejudices, now transformed into patriotism, defense of the homeland, and the mother tongue and of the lifeways they represented.

The nation turned to its schools as an important means to communicate its policies and to generate popular support for the War. It also looked to the schools to counter dissent and to acculturate immigrants so that they would mesh with the established American community and join the great crusade to "make the world safe for democracy." The very urgency of the moment also served to overcome traditional inhibitions, and led to

direct federal involvement in Americanization programs and related work in immigrant education.

Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane (within whose department the Bureau of Education was housed), speaking at the April 1918 conference aptly titled "Americanization as a War Measure," encouraged his audience of governors, state and education officials to "Preach Americanism.... We are trying a great experiment in the United States. Can we gather together people of different races, creeds, conditions, and aspirations, who can be merged into one?"[4]

The efforts to rapidly transform immigrants into the likeness of the Americanizer became a "movement" which persisted beyond the war years.[5] It resulted in a broadening of immigrant education to include formal instruction in mainstream American culture and lifeways. As John McClymer has written, the Americanizers "presided over the marriage of politics and culture. Loyalty to America would no longer be enough. Loyalty to the American way of life would be the new touchstone."[6] Americanization as political, linguistic and cultural transformation -- tested and refined in the Great War, would be an important weapon in the post-war period as America went on the attack against the Bolshevik menace.

As schools were drawn into the movement to transform their immigrant students, they redefined and enlarged their goals. The schoolhouse was to become a model of the "American Way" made manifest in the lives of immigrants.

In this paper I will examine federal government initiatives regarding Americanization, as represented by the work of three agencies: the Bureau of Naturalization, the Bureau of Education, and the Committee on Public Information. Other agencies and programs were involved in trying to change immigrant attitudes, allegiances and behaviors (the military services, the Liberty Loan Bond Drives, campaigns related to

food and energy conservation, etc.) but we will limit discussion to those which mounted explicit instructional programs directed at aliens.

We need to see how these federal agencies defined "Americanism" (the essentials of the American way of life) and "Americanization" (the process whereby immigrants were transformed into authentic Americans). I will describe the activities initiated by each of the agencies, and especially, how each sought to transmit its program to the local level. I will then seek to assess the effects, if any, of these programs on America's immigrant population.

Bureau of Naturalization

Before there could be federal involvement, the "immigrant problem" had to be defined as a national issue requiring a national response. While many studies in the 1890s and 1900s identified and detailed the problems of immigrants to the United States, they were initially perceived as problems of the individual and his or her ethnic community, not a collective national problem. After the turn of the 20th c., however, there was a growing concern, and public awareness, that immigration posed a "national" problem that the country as a whole had to resolve.[7] It was not until 1906 that the Congress asked the Bureau of Naturalization in the Department of Labor to draw up a uniform set of rules for the naturalization of aliens throughout the U.S. (prior to that individual states set procedures for the granting of citizenship -- state and federal). In 1913 the Commissioner of Naturalization was charged by Congress to administer the naturalization laws "and placed with the Bureau of Naturalization the charge of all matters concerning the naturalization of aliens."[8]

The effort to establish and raise standards for admission to citizenship led to an increase in the number of petitioners being rejected, and a growing demand for classes to prepare aliens to meet new requirements.

Gradually a program took shape which was to bring together the federal government, represented by the Bureau of Naturalization, and local public schools.

> It was seen that the influence of the bureau for the betterment of citizenship could be extended to every hamlet in the United States through the expansion and extension of the influence of the naturalization laws. This plan proposed the organization of the public schools with the Bureau of Naturalization into an active unit for the development of American ideals of citizenship in the student body....[9]

The Bureau assumed the task of devising a curriculum for an adult course in citizenship, of providing local educational authorities with the names of all aliens who applied for "first papers" and for naturalization, for publicizing the courses and later, for providing free student textbooks. The local public schools were responsible for organizing classes, finding teachers, providing classrooms and paying for the program.

Early in 1916 the Bureau issued "An Outline Course in Citizenship to be Used in the Public Schools for the Instruction of the Foreign and Native Born Candidates for Adult-Citizenship Responsibilities," prepared by Deputy Commissioner of Naturalization, Raymond Crist.

> This outline presents for the first time to the public schools of the United States a course designed to establish a citizenship laboratory in each public-school building. As this deals with citizenship, it properly comes from the National Government through the only Federal bureau specifically authorized by the law to deal with the question of citizenship within the Nation.[10]

The proposed course was to be offered exclusively in English. In fact, the course was little more than a modest introductory program in English language, using topics drawn from civics as the content. (More advanced history and government topics are suggested for "intermediate grade" students, although how it would be conveyed to adults with limited knowledge of English is never explained.) The course was in fact "intended to make possible a mastery of English speaking, reading, and writing, and by gradual steps

to lead into a realization of the full sense of the sacredness of the greatest rights of sovereignty which attach to the estate of American citizenship."[11] How these noble goals were to be achieved in a limited course of indeterminate length (not stated but implied to last no longer than a school year) is hard to comprehend, but it did not appear to be an acknowledged concern of the Bureau.

The Bureau, however, had larger ambitions than the shaping of American citizens out of immigrants. It wished to raise the quality of citizenship for all Americans.

> While this course is intended primarily for the candidate for citizenship by naturalization, its application to the curriculum of high schools and public graded schools is strongly urged, so that on the attainment of their majority all my have a full grasp of the functions of citizenship such as no preceding generation of the Nation has ever possessed.[12]

The Bureau saw itself working in partnership with the public schools in developing a standardized program of citizenship education as a "special branch of instruction." "The need undoubtedly exists for a more intimate sense of responsibility in the native born citizen for our Government and adequate instruction in citizenship responsibility should be established in every public school of the United States."[13]

We can see that from its earliest activities the Bureau of Naturalization sought to extend its influence beyond citizenship preparation of aliens to citizenship education of all Americans. By formulating curricula and citizenship "standards," a federal agency not only involved itself in making a national curriculum, but created a potential conduit through which the federal government could define a political orthodoxy. It also sought to establish English as the official language of American citizens and its government.

The Bureau's legal charge, however, was confined to immigrants, and in practical terms, to adult aliens (children up to school age were presumed to be the responsibility of the public schools). And since citizenship once gained by the husband extended to his

wife, the Bureau's focus was upon male immigrants (although they did encourage wives to attend classes and provided special activities for them). Single immigrant women, however, were not specifically addressed.

Attendance at English language and citizenship classes was voluntary for most adult immigrants.[14] Application for citizenship itself was a voluntary action, although during the heat of war there were efforts by ultra-patriotic groups to "force" immigrants to apply for citizenship on pain of deportation. The proportion of immigrants in any community who volunteered for classes was invariably low and the Bureau encouraged local public schools to employ every means of communication to reach and stimulate interest. The Bureau itself sent letters to every alien who had applied for "First Papers" or Citizenship, and as the letter stated, "because of this the United States Government is greatly interested in you." The letter explained that the government had asked the public schools to offer "classes for men and women who wish to learn how to speak, read, and write our language, and the things about our government which citizens should know." The school superintendent had been given the alien's name "and is expecting you to call at the school as soon as possible...." The immigrant husband is also encouraged to bring his wife to join the class. He is promised a free Citizenship Textbook and, on graduation, a "beautiful Diploma, which may be framed and hung in your home. This Diploma will show the Judge that you have studied to become a citizen."[15]

Implied in this "Dear Sir" letter was a government "order," well understood during this period of military conscription. There was also a suggestion that the instructional programs for immigrants had been organized because the U.S. Government has asked local schools to do so (whereas most adult programs for immigrants originated at the local level and pre-date federal involvement). Finally, perhaps cruelest of all, there is an implied

connection between the Diploma and the granting of citizenship by a judge. No such formal connection existed.

Publicity campaigns were mounted, President Wilson spoke before 20,000 new citizens in a celebration in Philadelphia in May of 1915, July 4, 1915 was declared Americanization Day across the U.S. and many local ceremonies were held to celebrate the granting of citizenship to the newly naturalized. This was the age of the great "campaign," and promoting the Americanization of immigrants and their transformation into model citizens became one of the major campaigns of its day. This campaign, as others mounted during war-time, was phrased in military jargon (drives, going over the top, battling), vesting them with an air of energy and militancy.

The actual number of immigrants affected by the activities of the Bureau of Naturalization-Americanization Section, is impossible to calculate. Many programs directed at the adult immigrant predated the efforts of the Bureau, especially in states such as New York, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts which had large immigrant populations. Many cities offered adult evening courses, in which immigrants were enrolled in English language and other courses, but their numbers are unknown. The Bureau never specified the number of immigrant students enrolled in the 1800 school districts with whom they claimed to be cooperating in 1917-18.[16] And the number of cooperating districts is seriously questioned by a contemporary authority.[17] Even though the Bureau designed and distributed student record cards to local school authorities for use in immigrant education courses, the Bureau lacked the staff to tabulate the data forwarded to them.

Undoubtedly the work of the Bureau, especially its propaganda campaigns, served to encourage some school districts to start adult immigrant education programs, and reinforced the efforts of districts with ongoing programs. But they did nothing to resolve a central

problem nation-wide: the inadequate financial support given by local communities to educate immigrants in the public schools.

The Bureau directed much of its energy to the production of published materials for teachers. In 1916 it published a "Syllabus of the Naturalization Law," so that public school teachers could serve as well-informed and free counselors to immigrants, many of whom were believed to be paying exorbitant fees to lawyers, notaries and others to lead them through the maze of newly established regulations.

In 1918 they published a Student Textbook: A Standard Course, for distribution, free of charge, to all "declared" and "petitioned" aliens enrolled in courses in cooperating school districts.[18] Reportedly based on material culled from contributions sent by school districts throughout the nation, and requiring a special act of Congress [May 9, 1918] to permit the Bureau to publish a textbook, it is a hodge-podge of materials with little sequencing, less gradation in its English Language lessons, eclectic views of American government and its branches and agencies, and an intended audience so varied as to make nine-tenths of the volume inappropriate for any one group (elementary to advanced students, non-English speaking to considerable English speaking ability, literates and illiterates in their first language). Frank Thompson, who conducted a study in 1918-19 of immigrant education for the Carnegie Corporation, surveyed school districts nationwide and found that it was "very difficult to find any public-school systems which are using it as a textbook.... Practically all schoolmen who have examined it are unanimous in declaring it is utterly unusable to the classes for which it is intended.[19]

The Bureau of Naturalization, however, had acknowledged that the 1918 edition was "wanting,"[20] and revised it in 1922, based on user critiques. In its 1922 version, it was entitled Federal Citizenship Textbook, Part I: English for American Citizenship. Divided into lessons for beginners and intermediates, it was a much more systematic treatment of

the English language, largely based on materials that had been developed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As with the 1918 version, a teacher's manual was provided. While a significant improvement over the 1918 edition, the 1922 version was no better than commercially published texts on English language for immigrants.

The Bureau's last effort at textbook revision was its 1924 edition, Federal Textbook on Citizenship Training, Part I: Our Language. As with the 1922 version, the promise of a companion text dealing with civics, government and citizenship was never realized. The Bureau had produced yet another English language textbook, with its content drawn from the realms of civics and government, and which reviewed the procedures to apply for citizenship (and some, not all, information upon which the candidate for citizenship might be tested by a judge). Many commercially produced English language textbooks covered the same ground more professionally and with greater facility.

One curio from the publications list of the Bureau must be mentioned. In 1919 it published the Federal Citizenship Textbook: A Standard Course of Instruction for Use in the Public Schools of the United States for the Preparation of the Candidate for the Responsibilities of Citizenship. Penmanship Sheets. Potential citizens combined the learning of the Palmer method with noble sayings (e.g., "The doors of wisdom are never shut." Benjamin Franklin).

The national citizenship curriculum and national citizenship textbook, no matter how well designed after successive revisions, could not get very far without students in real classrooms. Without federal financial support for immigrant education, local districts had to be both self-starting and self-financing.[21] For a time the impetus of the war moved a number of communities to offer courses to immigrants. But with the end of war, would the existing, inadequate level of effort, be able to sustain itself?

We now turn to the Bureau of Education, Department of the Interior, to see how this Bureau, and especially its Americanization Division, addressed the issue of Americanizing the immigrant, in war-time and following.

Bureau of Education

America's entry into the Great War highlighted a number of educational problems confronting the nation.

> [We have recently learned that] a great body of our own people, five and a half millions, ... can not read or write the language of this country... And these are not all of foreign birth. A million and a half are native born... we are drafting into our Army men who can not understand the orders that are given them to read... our manpower is deficient because our education is deficient.[22]

The draft revealed a serious problem of illiteracy among native-born as well as immigrant. Nearly a quarter of all army conscripts were illiterate.

> The crisis through which we are now passing has called our attention to the weakness and the dangers that spring from our neglect of the education of our own people and the proper instruction of those who come to us from abroad.... We are beginning to learn that the sins of omission must be paid for and are costly.[23]

The April 1918 Conference on "Americanization As a War Measure" was called by Secretary Lane to kick off a nation-wide movement to bring proper instruction to America's immigrants.

But what would constitute the content of such instruction? "Americanism" as a developed concept was never spelled out. It was discussed more in the nature of shared assumptions regarding the ideals of democratic government, equality before the law, freedom of religion and "opportunity." It was almost a mystic sense. In the words of Lane, "America is something mystical which lives in the heavens."[24] Whether in fact

government functioned democratically, or if all people were treated equally were issues that bothered some but not all Americanizers.

Americanization also had something to do with the great American experiment in fashioning a new people. "Can we gather together people of different races, creeds, conditions, and aspirations, who can be merged into one," was Lane's rhetorical question to the Conference.[25] Whatever Americanization was, most federal and many state and local officials acknowledged that immigrants could not be forced to Americanize.[26] As Education Commissioner Claxton stated, "We must win the mind and heart of the people for the country and its institutions and ideals. This can not be done by force or compulsion. Americanism can never be obtained through process of Prussianism."[27]

The first and often only instructional task that was undertaken was the teaching of English to immigrants. The movement for "English only" schooling was clearly evident in public and private schools across the nation.

> The [legislative] enactments of 1918-19 reflected an aroused sentiment crystallized by legislatures in laws specifying that English shall be the basic language of instruction in all elementary schools, public and private.[28]

Instruction in foreign languages was severely circumscribed, and in some states forbidden, especially at the elementary level. In a majority of American communities second language instruction never found its way back into the primary curriculum.

Claxton tied the learning of American democracy to learning English.

> Many [immigrants] do not understand our language and are therefore isolated from the great current of American thought. They must be given an opportunity to learn the language and induced to take advantage of the opportunity. They know little of our history, our ideals, our manners and customs, and of the demands of American social and civic life.[29]

John Finley, N.Y.C. Commissioner of Education, tied language learning directly to the war effort.[30] Citing that many draftees did not understand orders given in English, he argued that "the first thing we must do is teach these men to speak the English tongue."[31]

Immigrant education, however, was to encompass both language instruction (including literacy in English) and citizenship: the rights, duties and responsibilities of American citizens, knowledge of the government, laws, history and geography of the nation. In the words of a resolution passed by the Conference, the participants urged the passage of federal legislation to "promote, through the public schools, the systematic instruction of [immigrants] in American ideals, standards, and citizenship."[32]

The Conference also approved resolutions urging federal cooperation with states and localities in Americanization education for adult immigrants; that local industries cooperate with educational authorities and, where appropriate to allow classes to be held at the work site; that Congress appropriate funds for Americanization education, and "That in all schools in which the elementary subjects are taught they shall be taught in the English language only."[33]

The Bureau of Education, however, had no direct control over each state's department of education, and thus had no direct lines of communication to the grass roots -- to the immigrants perceived to be in need of instruction. The Bureau found its best route to the local level through the Council of National Defense and, through the Council, each State Council of Defense. The nation and state councils were the central voluntary umbrella organizations formed to promote and carry out war-related activities.

The Council of National Defense, in a letter dated February 18, 1918, informed each State Council that it had endorsed the Americanization work of the U.S. Bureau of Education, and asked them to lend their support and active collaboration. They asked each state to establish a Committee on Americanization of Aliens (if one did not already

exist), to assist the "Bureau of Education in carrying out its national program for Americanization," and to mount a state program following the Bureau's plans.[34]

Active cooperation of the State Councils was justified based on the war emergency. The Bureau, as the Council of National Defense letter argued, by means of its Americanization work, was attempting to weld "the many races and nationalities comprising America's thirteen million foreign born and thirty-three million of foreign origin into a unified American people back of the fighting line...."[35]

The announced aim of the program the Bureau wished to promote through the State Councils was to "MAKE ENGLISH THE LANGUAGE OF THE NATION."[36] The Bureau proposed that it engage in publicizing the Americanization program, produce and distribute materials, and correlate the work of all federal agencies engaged in programs of Americanization. The states were to organize Committees of Americanization, appoint directors, and mount "an immediate campaign under the slogan 'MAKE ENGLISH THE LANGUAGE OF YOUR STATE'."[37] They also were to organize a pro-American drive directed at aliens by means of Speakers Bureaus and announcements in the immigrant press. They were especially urged to promote the Americanization of aliens through local educational programs. Such instruction was to be in the English language and would include content on American customs and ideals. Female immigrants were to be encouraged to enroll along with their men, as "the Alien man is often best reached through the Alien woman."[38]

State Councils were asked to work at securing state financing to pay for immigrant classes. If possible, the Councils were also asked to promote state legislation to make night school attendance compulsory for non-English speaking illiterate minors (aged 16-21).

In the division of labor between the U.S. Bureau of Education and the states, the Bureau was to provide words -- of advice, direction and encouragement, and the states were to do the actual instruction and provide the financing. The State Councils of Defense were to serve as the Bureau's local agents, drumming up enthusiasm and encouraging action on the part of the state and local education authorities.

The U.S. Bureau of Education's Americanization program ultimately rang hollow. It tried to use its bully pulpit to exhort and advise, but it had no direct way to intervene in the education of immigrants. This "national" problem could only be attacked locally.

The best that a federal agency could do to reach the "local action" was to tap into the existing war-emergency networks. These quasi-public organizations had been created to communicate and coordinate national policies throughout the country and to pass "voluntary orders" down the chain of organization to the local level. The Bureau, by associating itself with the Council of National Defense, could not make compliance compulsory, only voluntary. But the Council did provide the needed bridge to grass-roots operating agencies.

Voluntarism rather than compulsion was the leitmotif of much of the American war effort, especially on the home front.[39] The Bureau of Education had turned to the proper umbrella organization. The State Councils could not be faulted for their lack of energy to mobilize state resources in support of the war and to stimulate patriotism. The proposed Americanization Campaign could and did tap a deep emotional chord, what Kennedy refers to as "the ancient American longing for a unanimous spirit, for a single, consensual set of values that would guarantee the social harmony... of the nation." As he writes, "no fact seemed more insulting to the ideal of unity in 1917 than the gaudy presence in American society of millions of unassimilated immigrants."[40]

The Bureau of Education was not the only federal agency to work with and through the State Councils. The Bureau of Naturalization-Americanization Section also sought their

aid as did the Committee on Public Information (CPI). No national program could be implemented until activities could penetrate to the ground level. The State Councils held out the potential to reach one's audience and therefore proved of great attraction to federal agencies.

The Bureau of Naturalization and of Education and the CPI were concerned with shaping and directing public opinion regarding immigrants, and in transforming them into Americans. Although they lacked the legal standing and financial resources to work directly with immigrants, their "words" were not without power in the arena of public opinion. George Creel, Director of the CPI and a central participant in the war-time Americanization Campaign, argued in favor of voluntarism and persuasion in preference to compulsion. He and others in the Wilson administration helped to blunt some of the most severe aspects of war-time chauvinism.

Creel was also conscious of the need to promote mutual adjustments on the part of native-born and immigrants, as well as the need to address problems of immigrants which were beyond their control.

> For years we have dismissed our responsibility in the alien by talking about the melting pot. You know and I know, and every other man of any intelligence knows, that it has been years since the melting pot did any melting. Month after month... the hopeful thousands came..., their hearts in their hands, their faces in a glow in the light that shines from the Statue of Liberty, and nobody met them there.... We have seen them lured into box cars and driven here and there, scorned by the States, by the cities, by the communities, and by the Government itself, and so how have they come to know America? One of the forces which betrayed Russia was the thousands of Russians who went back from the ghetto to tell them that Americanism was a lie.... Never, in my heart, have I been able to blame them, because the ghetto of New York is there; it is one of the great ulcers of American life, and we have never done anything in the world to let the light in, to let them see America as we know it.[41]

The Bureau did not produce many of its materials for the instruction of immigrants until after the war's end. The Americanization Campaign, however, continued beyond the

Armistice: the problems of the unassimilated (non-English speaking) immigrant had not been resolved. Yet voluntarism and persuasion remained the preferred strategy.[42]

In the immediate post-war period English language was still the principal concern and the states still the primary actors.[43] In addition to language and some civics instruction, schools were now urged to become "community centers," open evenings and weekends to the immigrant community, a place where native- and foreign-born could meet to socialize, a place where America could win the hearts and minds of aliens.[44] But counsels of empathy aside, the goal of Americanization still was to transform the immigrant into an American and to break up foreign colonies.[45]

At its heart the Bureau's Americanization program was an English language program.

> The position taken by the United States Bureau or Education... by Commissioner Claxton, is that English must be the primary language of all schools public and private; that the administration of the schools shall be in English; that such foreign languages as are taught shall be taught merely as part of the course of study and confined to their regular class periods.[46]

Community workers were encouraged to pressure state and local educational authorities to adopt this federal position.

In the post-war period, as during the war, the Bureau could only realize its program if local communities implemented and financed the program. The war emergency was a useful stimulus that the Bureau had been able to manipulate. The nation had to protect itself against the alien in its midst by transforming him into a safe and similar version of us. But in peacetime the pleas of the Bureau could not be amplified by war fears. The Bureau was reduced to lecturing:

> Even though there are no funds available, it is a shortsighted and unprogressive school board which will not at least permit the use of the school buildings. Any community that cares can do the rest. 'Are future Americans not to be taught

> English and not to be prepared for citizenship because the school tax does not provide for paying the janitor for night work or for turning on the electric light'?"[47]

Some Americanization workers, however, did recognize that there was more to "Americanization" than teaching the English language.

> The American future does not consist merely in teaching the foreign-born English or in holding meetings to decry bolshevism and sign up the 100 percent Americans. It is a matter of boards and concrete and timber and housing laws and inspectors to enforce them. The spiritual process of Americanization works only in souls that look out of windows that open on American streets. It is hard to feel patriotic devotion for a country when your part of it is a muddy maze of alleys full of stagnant pools, privies, refuse, dogs, cats, chickens, ducks, geese, and children -- even if some of them are yours.[48]

To what extent did the Bureau's activities result in the Americanization of immigrants? Thompson's study for the Carnegie Corporation, part of a series of investigations on Americanization conducted during and following the Great War, suggests that few additional immigrant classes were organized as a result of the Bureau of Education's drive, and that dropout rates from such classes remained exceedingly high.[49]

The Bureau's (and other's) promotion of English as the American language did seem to have some impact, although it is difficult to disentangle any one source of influence within the war context and the existing pressure for a narrow, conforming definition of America.

We face the same problem in trying to assess the impact of the Bureau of Naturalization and Bureau of Education on rates of application for citizenship. War-time fears that inaction on citizenship would be interpreted as unAmerican undoubtedly influenced many aliens to apply for "first papers." However, in 1920 there were still over one third of all adult white aliens who had "no papers."[50]

Committee on Public Information -- The National School Service

The last federal agency we shall examine is the Committee of Public Information, and, in particular its National School Service. The CPI was established at the propaganda arm of the government in the days immediately following declaration of war. Headed by George Creel and staffed with journalistic muckrakers and progressive reformers, the agency shunned coercion and censorship. Creel "took quite seriously the traditional regard of American democracy for the individual consenting will as the cornerstone of political legitimacy and social action. He made that scrupulous voluntarism the informing motif of the CPI's activities."[51] Persuasion through presentation of the "facts" of the war, and cultivation of popular consensus through informational campaigns would stand America in place of European "authoritarianism."

Not surprisingly Creel's Committee became deeply involved in the wartime Americanization campaign. The problem Creel and other "voluntary" Americanizers faced was to create a message that was so persuasive and penetrating that immigrants would voluntarily transform themselves into true English speaking Americans. The CPI used every available channel of communications to broadcast its message consistently and persistently at the immigrant population: reaching out to ethnic organizations, helping to form patriotic immigrant leagues, feeding news to foreign language publications, and establishing speakers bureaus.[52]

The CPI's message was communicated against the backdrop of war, and insistent calls to patriotism and loyalty. The war emergency powered the Americanizing message and lent it an aura of moral duty. Voluntary acquiescence was turned into a moral imperative. The power of "collective" voluntary action, of social pressures to conform to the collective will, was a force more powerful than authoritarian educt. The CPI and other patriotic groups were able to manipulate the levers of social control, shape and control the

behaviors of aliens (and native born dissenters) more quickly, directly and effectively than would have been possible via the formal legislative process.[53]

From its earliest days the CPI had published pamphlets for distribution in schools and colleges, as well as to the public-at-large [Red, White and Blue series, War Information Series, Loyalty leaflets]. One publication, Samuel B. Harding's "The Study of the Great War: A Topical Outline, with Extensive Quotations and Reading References," (April 1918) was used as the basis for many high school courses of study across the nation.[54]

But the CPI and especially Guy Stanton Ford, a Columbia University historian on leave to work with Creel's agency, was interested in forging more direct links with the public schools, and through them with immigrant communities.[55] Warmly welcomed by educators, the CPI launched its biweekly newspaper, the National School Service, in September 1918 as a vehicle to communicate directly with the nation's schoolteachers. Circulation of the NSS was about 600,000 but the CPI could not keep pace with demand. School people were as patriotic as their fellow Americans and the NSS provided them with information and advice on how they and their students could contribute to winning the war.

The NSS, as a publication of the federal government, had a decidedly "official" aura to it, enhanced by President Wilson's best wishes to the newspaper printed in its first issue. Educators could use it to fend off the more extreme demands ultrapatriotic groups were making upon the school. The NSS also helped to coordinate the numerous requests of federal agencies seeking school assistance, including everything from gathering fruit pits for gas masks to canvassing for Liberty Bonds. The NSS informed teachers what they could do that week or month, and explained how it could be done.

From its outset the NSS combined "news" coverage of the war, suggestions on how to include war study in the school curriculum, a strong stress on community service, and

the obligations of citizenship. The message they communicated to native born and immigrant was to embrace "Americanism," a term which included "all values and ideals that make up the American way of life."[56]

As Vaughn, a thoughtful student of the CPI has argued, the CPI tried to use their school paper to stimulate a "spiritual renaissance." American youth would be made aware of the responsibilities of citizenship, of the duty to fight injustices on the home front as well as the international arena, and would forge a commitment on the part of America's youth to such American ideals as equal opportunity, religious tolerance, universal schooling, majority rule and minority rights, and freedom of speech and press.[57]

The NSS, especially its editorial page, became a magnificent lecture platform from which the academics who comprised its editorial staff could preach a mildly progressive-reformist message to the nation's youth. They were patriots but not for the most part bigoted against the "newcomers" in our midst. They believed in the mystic Americanism of Secretary Lane and President Wilson, and were anxious to tap the energies and excitement of war to create born-again Americans, committed to community service and to a collective approach to solving America's social problems. This was the inaugural issue's message:

> The one clear note that our schools have sounded is service. They have never taught, and never can teach in a great democracy, that private gain and individual excellence are the true measure of either education or success. The welfare of all has been the supreme lesson of popular education.[58]

War work was a great school for citizenship and should be embraced by the schools, as they fervently did.[59]

The freedom of the individual in a democracy, the right to stand apart from the group, to dissent and to refuse to "voluntarily" comply to the will of the majority, these

were aspects of American political democracy generally absent from the pages of the NSS and from the words of those who "advertised the war."[60]

The NSS informed teachers (and through them, students) of the progress of the war via stories and war maps, it explained the "causes" of the war and why we were forced to enter the battle to make the world safe for democracy, regularly carried articles detailing the superiority of Americanism to Prussianism,[61] and described how schools could collaborate in the war effort (Red Cross work, food conservation, "thrift," Savings Bonds and Stamps, and other activities).

With the signing of the Armistice, coverage shifted to the work of peace, the influenza epidemic, food shortages in Europe,[62] President Wilson's peace terms, and strong support for the League of Nations. In particular, the NSS explained to schools and students what they could do to facilitate demobilization and a return to normalcy.

The CPI was shutdown unceremoniously at the end of December 1918. The NSS, however was kept alive and shifted to the Division of Educational Extension of the Department of the Interior, with virtually its entire editorial staff and advisory board intact, where publication continued until May 1919. Coverage now focused on Americanization and a national back-to-school drive.

> In the next few months the demobilization of industries will cause many children to be thrown out of employment. Every effort must be made, not only to get these children back to school, but to keep children who are now in school from leaving.[63]

But some adolescent workers would still be needed to help produce and harvest food for starving Europe. Returning soldiers were expected to reenter shops and mills.

> The boys of the [United States Boys' Working] Reserve will once more be needed to raise the crops, and if they do not respond, the crops are not likely to be raised. [The starving in Europe must be saved.] Democracy can never be safe in a hungry world.[64]

The pages of the NSS were also used to support federal aid to education. Interior Secretary Lane called for federal funds to support English language education and compared federal assistance to immigrant education to federal support flowing to vocational and agricultural education and road building. "Surely," Lane, wrote, "without violation of our fundamental law we can find a way by which the Nation can know that all of its people are able to talk and read our language. I do not suggest Federal control, but I would strongly urge Federal cooperation with the States toward definite ends."[65]

Those interested in immigrant education and in the related issue of citizenship education -- for native and foreign born -- had their appetites whetted by the war experience. National coordinated programs could be mounted and directed by Washington, and could be linked directly to schools. There was clearly a desire to retain and strengthen this national network. In the absence of a national threat, however, the context promoting national cooperation dissolved and states withdrew within their own boundaries and reasserted their independence of action. With the end of the war came an end to voluntarism as an effective governmental strategy to attack public problems.

The new director of the NSS, J. J. Pettijohn, in the January 1, 1919 issue, charted the paper's direction under new sponsorship. Problems of peace and demobilization will continue to be treated, but,

> above all [schools, with the aid of the NSS, must offer] active aid in support of movements to assist our 'melting pot' in casting out the slag of alienism and disloyalty, and fusing foreign born and native born in a single, homogeneous, progressive American stock....[66]

In subsequent issues (January 15, February 1, February 15) the NSS presented maps to highlight the immigration problem in America, state by state, and ethnic group by ethnic group. "Making True Americans" is the central theme of the April 1, 1919 issue. The

National Americanization Campaign is described, true Americanism is defined (obliquely and in mystical terms), and school teachers are counseled on what they can do to carry the Campaign to their communities.

This issue also carried a reprint from the Washington, D.C. Herald which served to summarize the NSS' goals in promoting true Americanism in the schools.

> [Once] the frontier was the great Americanizer... the pressure of common work moulded [different nationalities] into Americans.
>
> The foreign colonies of the great cities came with the disappearance of the frontier. As nationalities drew trade, political, and residential lines they built race partitions in our 'polyglot boarding house.'
>
> Then came the great common task of the war, when we carried the frontier of American democracy overseas. The national army became the great Americanizer.
>
> We need a frontier and a crusade today... Teaching English does not make Americans. Teaching civics is not enough.... [America's] frontier is now social and political.... Instead of forest, prairies, deserts, and swamps, we must now advance against ignorance, disease, poverty, and injustice. Instead of foreign autocracy, we fight against domestic greed and tyranny.[67]

The war, on a metaphorical level, had not ended. Schools had to raise the banner of Americanism and do battle against imported foreign tyranny and domestic evil. The immigrant embodied both. The schools were to exorcise the foreign, alien, deviant ways of the immigrant, the unwitting carrier of discredited old world ways. The evils of the American world also gathered around the poor, readily exploited, uneducated slum dwelling immigrant. Schools had to help transform them, teach them to speak our language. Native Americans, for their part, had to learn to communicate with immigrants and open their communities to receive the newcomers. The staff of the NSS wanted simultaneously to educate the immigrant and prepare the native to graciously receive these newly minted Americans.

Conclusions

1. In the tradition of administrative progressivism, the federal Americanizers defined and publicized the "immigrant problem" and then tried to fashion a structured, bureaucratic solution based on the application of "professional expertise." As the Cincinnati School Superintendent, a member of the NSS Advisory Board, phrased it,

> if you can see your problem large enough and clear enough and can organize it small enough all the difficulties will resolve themselves into simple elements which can be solved.[68]

Campaigns and Drives could bring an issue to the public's attention, but the problems of immigrants were chronic, not acute and required professional attention and commitment over the long haul. Deep seated social problems could not be resolved by volunteer efforts coordinated by temporary organizations.

> Mushroom organizations, like councils of defense... are not competent to undertake successfully the careful and persistent efforts necessary toward an effective solution [to the problems of immigrant education]. The organization to be chosen must have permanency like that of our school system or our courts.[69]

To gain permanence federal immigrant educators wanted to maintain and strengthen their working relations with local schools. They also attempted to broaden their purview to include the more general American educational problems of illiteracy, school drop-outs and citizenship education for all American youth.

2. The education of immigrants was identified as a national problem which implied federal involvement. But, at the time, the federal government had not yet extended its bureaucratic reach into every community through large numbers of federal workers in the field, nor through federal financial assistance which could be used as a lever to direct local efforts. In the absence of a war emergency to induce cooperation, a national problem

fractured into thousands of local issues. Whether and how they were addressed depended on the particular dynamics of the local community. Following the Great War (and the Red Scare which was its domestic coda), Washington's ability to lead receded as the national threat faded.

3. Central planning and direction in a federal system of government must rely on persuasion to gain local cooperation, especially if it lacks financial resources to fund local efforts. The federal role, as in the case of the Americanization campaign, is limited to defining and studying a problem, publishing and promoting findings, communicating with other jurisdictions, and promoting collaboration. It cannot implement programs directly. Persuasion only works to resolve local problems when a national crisis galvanizes all segments and sectors of the nation. As soon as the crisis passes, independence of the "parts" is reasserted.

Schools actively participated in the nationally directed Americanization program, and in other war-related activities. A "system" seemed to be in place and working. But at war's end each state and local educational agency resumed its independent status. What had appeared to be a national education system was an illusion created by temporary "parallel play." All schools were simultaneously involved in a giant war game and when we won the game, the players picked up their pieces and went home.

4. Americanization lacked the political constituency to convert an identified problem into federally sponsored and funded programs. The federal support for agricultural and vocational education (passed at that time) reflected both the perceived national significance of these instructional areas and the national political support from farmers' and manufacturers' groups. Immigrants did not vote and their former champions, especially the National Association of Manufacturers which had relied upon immigrants as a continuous and low cost labor source, no longer gave unqualified support to immigrants and

immigration. Immigrant educators and reformers lacked the political clout to turn a significant national problem into a federal concern.

5. The "English Only" language campaign succeeded in large part because it played to prevailing war-time prejudices and nativist preferences. In addition, English only laws represented either a cost free or cost saving reform: instruction now did not have to be offered in foreign languages. Several states rescinded these restrictive laws once the period of war hysteria had passed. But in others these restrictions remained in force.

6. The success of the Americanization campaign in bringing the problems of immigrants to national attention may have led to the movement's ultimate destruction. Federal Americanizers effectively framed and communicated the problem. Raymond Crist preached in the pages of the NSS that "it is our duty and our necessity to convert this multitude within our gates into loyal American citizens. The task is tremendous...."[70] On the one hand, Crist built the case for concerned, professional attention to a critical problem. On the other, he raised fears of an insoluble problem which could lead to the downfall of "the American Way."

Education might help to solve the immigrant problem, assuming adequate commitment of resources and sufficient knowhow. But a cheap and sure solution was becoming increasingly attractive: stop immigration. The evils of the old world, evils represented both by the just ended war (from which America now wished to distance itself) and the radical, Bolshevik uprisings then in progress, had to be kept away from our shores. To stop the spread of old world ills, stop the carrier -- the immigrant. Isolation was a direct and simple solution.

The Americanization campaign was highly successful, at least on one level. The nation was clearly aware of the dangers posed by unassimilated, unAmericanized aliens. But rarely did the propaganda programs which spoke of immigrant problems also speak of

the values and virtues of immigrants, the cultural treasures they embodied, their commitment to underlying values of political freedom and democracy, or of the nearly 150 year national tradition of open doors. Scare campaigns may have scared off those who needed to become active and sympathetic participants in the process of immigrant accommodation.

Beginning in the 1880s pressure began to build to close the open gates to immigration. It took nearly two generations and a world war to swing popular opinion to the side of immigrant restriction. In 1921, for the first time in the nation's history, an absolute yearly limit on immigration was imposed, along with national quotas which harshly discriminated against the new immigrants of southern and eastern Europe.

In the final analysis the immigrant problem, defined by social reformers as an educational problem, was solved crudely but directly by halting immigration and not by the more elusive strategy of "Americanizing" and assimilating the aliens who had always come to live among us.

Footnotes

1. Barry D. Karl, The Uneasy State: The United States from 1915 to 1945. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983, p. 39.

2. How We Advertised the War, N.Y.: Harper & Bros., 1920, p. 166.

3. Strangers in the Land [2nd Ed.]. N.Y.: Atheneum, 1973.

4. Bulletin, 1918, no. 11, Dept. of Interior, Bureau of Education; 15, 18.

5. Edward G. Hartmann, The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1948.

6. "The Americanization Movement and the Education of the Foreign-Born adult, 1914-1925," in B. Weiss, ed., American Education and the European Immigrant: 1840-1940. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1982, p. 111.

7. See, for example, U.S. Immigration Commission, Reports (37 Vols.) 61st Cong., 3d session, Sen. Doc 749. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911.

8. "The Work of the Public Schools with the Bureau of Naturalization, for the year ending June 30, 1916," U.S. Government Printing Office, 1917, p. 5.

9. Ibid., p. 6.

10. U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Naturalization, "Outline Course in Citizenship," U.S. Government Printing Office, 1916, p. 7.

11. Ibid., p. 7.

12. Ibid., p. 7.

13. "The Work of the Public Schools...," p. 11.

14. Several states such as New York and Massachusetts passed compulsory attendance laws for 16-21 year-old immigrants not literate in English. Actual implementation of the laws, however, appears to have fallen far short of the mark.

15. Form letter, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Naturalization, Washington, no date, facsimile signature of the Commissioner of Naturalization; National Archives, Immigration and Naturalization Papers, Record Group 85, 27671/E, Box 1, file E-5/2).

16. U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Naturalization, "Third Year of the Work of the Public Schools with the Bureau of Naturalization." U.S. Government Printing Office, 1919, p. 1916.

17. Frank Thompson, Schooling of the Immigrant, Harper & Bros., 1920, p. 337-340.

18. Third Year...., p. 19.

19. Thompson, p. 347.

20. Third Year..., p. 20.

21. There was some state financial aid in several states. See Thompson, p. 306-07.

22. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Bureau of Education, "Americanization As a War Measure," Bulletin 1918, No. 11, p. 18.

23. Commission of Education Claxton, in Ibid., pp. 60-61.

24. Ibid., p. 16.

25. Ibid., p. 18.

26. Several state representatives at the Conference called for compulsory school attendance for immigrants who were non-English speakers. Several states outlawed the use of German in public activities, including schools (among which were the states of Iowa, Nebraska and Idaho), and some demanded unqualified allegiance to the government and its war policies. The Governor of Idaho, speaking at the Conference, maintained that "who is not with the government in this crisis is against the Government [and] has no business in this country." Ibid., p. 54.

27. Ibid., p. 61.

28. Thompson, p. 288.

29. Americanization As a War Measure, p. 62.

30. Finley also sought to use the Conference and the importance it lent to immigrant education as part of the war effort, to advance his legislative agenda regarding the education of immigrants: a special appropriation for the training and employment of teachers of English to immigrants, and legislation making school attendance compulsory for illiterate, non-English speaking immigrants between the ages of 16 and 21.

31. Ibid., p. 33.

32. Ibid., p. 43.

33. Ibid., p. 36.

34. National Archives, Committee on Public Information, Record Group 63 nnfj, 5W, Box #156, CPI 11A-A1:2/12/18, letter from Council of National Defense, Washington, D.C., to all State Councils of Defense, "Bulletin No. 86; Americanization of Aliens," p. 1.

35. Ibid.

36. "Outline of National and State Programs of the United States Bureau of Education and of the Work of State Councils and State Divisions of the Woman's Committee in Regard to Americanization," p. 2, appended to Ibid. (Capitalized in the original.)

37. "Outline..." p. 3, in Ibid.

38. Ibid., p. 4.

39. David M. Kennedy, Over Here. N.Y. Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 45-92.

40. Ibid., p. 63.

41. "Americanization As a War Measure," p. 31.

42. Fred Clayton Butler, Director of Americanization, Bureau of Education, "State Americanization," Bulletin, 1919, no. 77, Bureau of Education, Department of the Interior, 1920, p. 7.

43. Ibid., pp. 8, 11.

44. Fred Clayton Butler, "Community Americanization: A Handbook for Workers," Bulletin, 1919, no. 76, Bureau of Education, Department of the Interior, 1920, p. 6.

45. Ibid., pp. 16-17.

46. Ibid., p. 31.

47. Ibid., p. 33.

48. Esther Everett Lape, participation in Community Americanization Conference of May, 1919, Ibid., p. 44.

49. Thompson, chapter. 1.

50. "Citizenship Training of Adult Immigrants in the United States. Its Status in Relation to the Census of 1920," Department of Labor, Bureau of Naturalization, 1925, p.3.

51. Kennedy, p. 60.

52. Stephen Vaughn, Holding Fast the Inner Lines: Democracy, Nationalism, and the Committee on Public Information. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1980, pp. 98-115.

53. See my "New York City Schools March Off to War: The Nature and Extent of Participation of the City Schools in the Great War, April 1917 to April 1918," a paper presented at the 1988 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA, April 6, 1988 for a discussion of voluntary persuasion in the sale of Liberty Bonds.

54. The influence of this work is reflected in "The World War: A Syllabus for the Use in the Elementary Schools of the City of New York," issued by the N.Y.C. Board of Education in June of 1918, and a similar syllabus released for use in the high schools.

55. G. Stanton Ford, National School Service, "The Schools as They have Affected Government Activities," N.E.A. of the U.S. Addresses and Proceedings of the 57th Annual Meeting, Milwaukee, Wisc., June 28-July 5, 1919," Washington: NEA, 1919, pp. 583-542.

56. Vaughn, p. 104.

57. Vaughn, p. 105.

58. Editorial page, National School Service, Vol. 1, no. 1, Sept. 1, 1918, p. 8.

59. See my "New York City Schools March Off to War..."

60. Vaughn, p. 115; George Creel, How We Advertised America, N.Y.: Harper & Bros., 1920.

61. See especially Vol. 1, no. 4, Oct. 15, 1918, p. 9.

62. "Food Will Win the World," Dec. 1, 1918, p. 6.

63. NSS, Vol. 1, no. 8, December 15, 1918, p. 7.

64. Ibid., p. 7.

65. Ibid., p. 8.

66. NSS, Vol. 1, no. 9, January 1, 1919, p. 8.

67. Ibid., p. 6.

68. Randall J. Condon, "Education of the Immigrant," N.E.A. of the U.S..... 1919, p. 560).

69. Thompson, p. 365.

70. NSS, Vol. 1, no. 15, April 1, 1919, p. 7.